

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 04802 291413Z
ACTION SS-25

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S E C R E T BEIRUT 4802

EXDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (MRN 4802 V I C E 4302)

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR MOPS MILI US IS LE
SUBJ: SOUTH LEBANON: CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENT CHAMOUN

1. FONMIN BOUTROS ASKED IF I COULD MEET WITH PRESIDENT CHAMOUN MONDAY EVENING, SEPT. 27, BEFORE MY DEPARTURE AND TALK TO HIM ABOUT CEASE-FIRE IN SOUTH. HE INDICATED THAT CHAMOUN'S EGO NEEDED MASSAGING IN ORDER TO GET HIM TO TAKE MORE POSITIVE ATTITUDE. I ACCORDINGLY CALLED ON CHAMOUN AT HIS SUMMER RESIDENCE AT BEIT MERY AT 1700 LOCAL SEP. 27. HIS SON DORY WAS ALSO PRESENT.

2. I TOLD CHAMOUN THAT I FRANKLY DID NOT KNOW WHY ISRAEL HAD UNDERTAKEN SEPT. 16 INCURSION INTO LEBANESE TERRITORY NOR DID I KNOW WHETHER OR NOT HIS PNL FORCES HAD BEEN INVOLVED. INCURSION WAS OBVIOUSLY A FALSE STEP WHICH THREATENED SHTAURA ACCORD, HOWEVER, AND WE HAD EXERTED CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE ON ISRAELIS TO WITHDRAW. THEY HAD REFUSED TO WITHDRAW WITHOUT CEASE FIRE BECAUSE THEY SAID THEY COULD NOT LEAVE THEIR CHRISTIAN ALLIES IN THE LURCH. WE HAD ACCORDINGLY WORKED VERY HARD

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WITH GOVERNMENTS IN TEL AVIV AND BEIRUT TO REACH AGREEMENT ON ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL AND CEASE-FIRE. I WAS NOT GOING INTO EXACT TERMS BUT ESSENTIALLY WHAT WAS INVOLVED WAS ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL AND STANDSTILL BY OTHER FORCES. THERE WAS NO PALESTINIAN COMMITMENT TO WITHDRAW. THE NEXT STEP IN OUR VIEW WAS TO PROCEED WITH IMPLEMENTATION OF SHTAURA ACCORD, WHICH WOULD INVOLVE PALESTINIAN WITHDRAWAL AND

STATIONING OF LEBANESE TROOPS ALONG BORDER AS HE WELL KNEW. BALL WAS NOW IN LEBANESE AND ISRAELI COURT. WE ENVISAGED FIRST ACTION AS BEING MEETING OF ISRAELI-LEBANESE MIXED ARMISTICE COMMISSION. WE UNDERSTOOD CONTACTS TO THIS END WERE ALREADY UNDERWAY. GENERAL KHOURY HAD INDICATED HE WOULD NOT WANT TO SEND TROOPS INTO AREA UNTIL CERTAIN COORDINATED AGREEMENT WITH ALL PARTIES CONCERNED, INCLUDING ISRAELIS, HAD BEEN REACHED.

3. WE UNDERSTOOD THAT PLO WAS SINCERELY ANXIOUS TO GET ITS FORCES OUT OF SOUTH LEBANON AND HOPED THAT ISRAELIS AND CHRISTIANS WOULD GO ALONG WITH SHTAURA AGREEMENT EVEN THOUGH IT DID NOT GIVE THEM EVERYTHING THEY WANTED. I KNEW THAT CHAMOUNS WANTED TO SEE ALL PALESTINIANS REMOVED FROM LEBANON BUT THAT WASN'T GOING TO HAPPEN. WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF THE SHTAURA ACCORD WAS IMPLEMENTED, HOWEVER, WOULD BE WITHDRAWAL OF PALESTINIANS FROM ZONE ALONG BORDER, WHICH WOULD MEAN THAT CHRISTIAN VILLAGES IN PARTICULAR WOULD NO LONGER BE FACED WITH PALESTINIAN PROBLEM. THIS WOULD MEAN AN ENORMOUS IMPROVEMENT IN THE LIFE OF THE PEOPLE IN SOUTH.

4. CHAMOUN GAVE HIS FAMILIAR HISTORICAL EXPLANATION FOR ISRAELI-CHRISTIAN COOPERATION IN SOUTH AND SAID PNL INTERESTED ONLY IN PEACE. IF CEASE-FIRE DID LEAD TO IMPLEMENTATION OF SHTAURA ACCORD, HE COULD ASSURE US OF HIS
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COOPERATION. HE EMPHASIZED THAT PNL COMBATANTS IN THE SOUTH WERE FROM VILLAGES IN THOSE AREAS AND WERE NOT SENT DOWN FROM THE NORTH. THEY WERE ENGAGED IN THE DEFENSE OF THEIR HOMES. HE EXPRESSED SKEPTICISM THAT THE PALESTINIANS WOULD IN FACT OBSERVE THE CEASE-FIRE, HOWEVER, AND SAID THAT PNL WOULD HAVE TO RESPOND IF THEY DID NOT OBSERVE IT. I SAID ALL OF US HAD OUR FINGERS CROSSED, BUT THAT I THOUGHT OBJECTIVE CONDITIONS WERE SUCH THAT PALESTINIANS HAD AN INTEREST IN MAINTAINING CEASE-FIRE. FURTHERMORE, MY GOVERNMENT WAS EXTREMELY INTERESTED IN SEEING PROGRESS ON THIS ISSUE AND I COULD ASSURE HIM WE WOULD BE MAKING EVERY EFFORT WE COULD. CHAMOUN RESPONDED THAT HE THOUGHT SHTAURA AGREEMENT COULD BE IMPLEMENTED PROVIDED U.S. MADE CLEAR TO PALESTINIANS THAT IT MEANT BUSINESS. I SAID THEY ALREADY KNEW THAT.

5. COMMENT: IF SHTAURA AGREEMENT CAN BE IMPLEMENTED IT WILL BE A MAJOR POSITIVE POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT FOR LEBANON AND MAY OPEN DOOR TO NATIONAL RECONCILIATION. CHAMOUN'S ROLE IS GOING TO BE IMPORTANT IN THIS RESPECT. WHILE HE CANNOT BRING OFF IMPLEMENTATION, HE HAS CONSIDERABLE CAPACITY FOR SPOILING. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE CONTINUE TO KEEP IN TOUCH

WITH HIM AND ENLIST HIS SUPPORT.
PARKER

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NNN

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